



Northumbria Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

Acupuncture

Information for patients on the use of acupuncture
in palliative care

Issued by the Palliative Physiotherapy Team

What is acupuncture?

Acupuncture is a treatment that involves the insertion of fine needles at certain sites in the body for therapeutic purposes. Acupuncture treatment that is provided by your Physiotherapist is based on an evidence-based, Western approach, and is provided alongside conventional medicine.

How does acupuncture work?

Acupuncture stimulates nerves in the body causing the brain to release your body's own natural painkillers and hormones to relieve pain and other symptoms. It also has a localised effect on muscle tone, relieving pain through relaxation of muscles and their surrounding tissues.

It may also have a beneficial effect on your overall physical and psychological well being.

How long is the treatment?

Treatments normally take place weekly for up to 6 weeks. Your initial assessment and treatment may last up to an hour, with needles left in place for approximately 20 minutes. Subsequent treatments may vary depending on your condition and response to treatment.

You will be asked to read and sign a consent form at your initial session, as acupuncture is an invasive therapy.

Is it safe?

Serious side effects are rare – less than one per 10,000 treatments. Mild side –effects may include bleeding, bruising, temporary increase in symptoms, feeling faint or fatigued. Please ask your physiotherapist if you have any further concerns.

Contraindications and precautions

Your physiotherapist will take a thorough history prior to offering acupuncture which will take into consideration any contraindications to treatment and/or any precautions needed to ensure a safe treatment.

If you have read this leaflet and the procedure has been explained to you, please sign the consent for treatment form before proceeding with treatment.

If you have any other questions please discuss them with your physiotherapist.

Further advice is available from your therapist:

Name:

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Telephone:

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Days of work:

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Alternative contact:

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Alternative Formats

If you would like a copy of this information in large print, another language, audio tape or other format please call the Contact Centre on 03 44 811 8118.

Other sources of information

NHS 111

NHS Choices

www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx

NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence)

www.nice.org.uk

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Freephone: 0800 032 0202

Text: 07815 500015

Email: northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

General Enquiries 03 44 811 8111

www.northumbria.nhs.uk

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